No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/05/02 : LOC-HAK-93-2-27-7

AMEMB KINSHASA

Department of State TELEGRAM

UNCLASSIFIED
Classification

UK
SAA
CN: 11072

SEP 21 17 33'76

99 RUTAVC ESAA4529A902
DE RUDTC 4959/01 2651725
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O R 2117232 SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5703
INFO RUTAVC/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE 0571
RUVCDA/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 1045
RUVCC/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 1867
RUEHPC/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO 0306
RUEHPC/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1402
RUVCBR/AMEMBASSY LUSAKA 1178
RUEHPC/AMEMBASSY GABORONE 0321
BT
UNCLAS ~~SECTION 01 OF 02~~ LONDON 14959

KINSHASA FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, RH, US, UK
SUBJECT: BRITISH PRESS COMMENTS ON RHODESIAN DEVELOPMENTS

BRITISH PRESS HAS REACTED WITH SKEPTICISM TO REPORTS OF "CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS" RESULTING FROM AMERICAN SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THREE THEMES RUN THROUGH THE SEPTEMBER 21 REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF LONDON'S LEADING PAPERS: 1) SMITH IS UP TO HIS OLD TRICKS, HE IS PLAYING OUT KISSINGER THE SAME WAY HE PLAYED OUT WILSON, TIMELY MAJORITY RULE IS TOO MIRACULOUS TO BELIEVE; 2) EVEN IF THERE IS AGREEMENT TO THE BROAD OUTLINES OF A SETTLEMENT THERE ARE TOO MANY OTHER OBSTACLES IN THE WAY AND ANY OPTIMISM IS PREMATURE -- E.G. CAN A NON-BICKERING NATIONALIST TEAM BE ASSEMBLED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE WHITES? WOULD THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES BE A PRECONDITION TO A CONFERENCE? CAN SMITH SELL A SETTLEMENT PACKAGE TO THE ADAMANT RIGHT WING OF THE RHODESIAN FRONT? 3) THE PESSIMISM, CAUTION AND WARINESS IN THE PRESS REFLECTS THE ATMOSPHERE IN WHITEHALL, AND THE PRIVATE SPECULATION OF FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS. PATRICK KEATLEY IN THE GUARDIAN WRITES:

"IN WHITEHALL LAST NIGHT THERE WAS DEEPENING ANXIETY ABOUT THE REALISM OF THE AMERICAN TEAM UNDER DR. KISSINGER IN THE TALKS WITH MR. SMITH.

MR. CROSLAND AND FOREIGN OFFICE EXPERTS, WITH THEIR MEMORIES OF PAST ENCOUNTERS WITH THE OBDURATE RHODESIAN LEADER, SHOW NO READINESS TO MAKE A HASTY COMMITMENT TO A CONFERENCE IN LONDON WHICH MIGHT TURN INTO A FARCE.

DR. KISSINGER APPEARS TO HAVE FALLEN FOR THE OLDEST TRICK IN MR. SMITH'S CATALOGUE. THIS IS THE DEVICE OF BUYING TIME--IN THIS CASE ON THE PREMISE THAT DR.

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KISSINGER HIMSELF WILL NOT BE IN POWER MUCH LONGER AND WILL NOT BE PRESENT TO ENFORCE ANY BARGAIN THAT HE STRIKES.

THE ANXIETY IN LONDON FOCUSES ON THE PROSPECT OF A VETO BY BLACK AFRICA WHICH WOULD SABOTAGE A LONDON CONFERENCE AND PROVE EMBARRASSING TO BRITAIN AS THE CONSTITUTIONALLY RESPONSIBLE POWER.

A PHRASE NOTED HERE IN THE BRIEFING FROM THE KISSINGER TEAM, SUGGESTED THAT THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE WAS NO LONGER ABSOLUTELY COMMITTED TO THE TWO-YEAR TIMETABLE FOR TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA. TO BRITISH EARS THERE IS A FAMILIAR RING TO THIS."

AND IN THE TELEGRAPH, VINCENT RYDER WRITES:

"OPTIMISM AMONG OFFICIALS IN DR. KISSINGER'S ENTOURAGE THAT MR. IAN SMITH HAS ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLE OF MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA AND THAT A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE COULD FOLLOW WITHIN TWO MONTHS FOUND NO ECHO IN WHITEHALL YESTERDAY.

THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT GOING TO THROW ITS HAT IN THE AIR, OR EVEN DOFF IT RESPECTFULLY TO DR. KISSINGER, UNTIL MR. SMITH COMMITS HIMSELF, PUBLICLY AND UNAMBIGUOUSLY, TO MAJORITY AFRICAN RULE WITHIN TWO YEARS.

THERE ARE SUSPICIONS THAT WHATEVER HE MAY HAVE SAID PRIVATELY TO DR. KISSINGER, HE MAY MAKE A TEMPORISING STATEMENT IN SALISBURY LATER THIS WEEK AND SEEK PROLONGED NEGOTIATIONS.

THE WARINESS IS THE RESULT OF PAST EXPERIENCES OF DEALING WITH THE RHODESIAN LEADER, RATHER THAN INFORMATIO RELAYED BY THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE."

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